

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

The tourism industry has known a rapid growth compared to the others industrials sector. Moreover, it has been much exploited, which makes the study of its alternative more interesting and remain as a fresh topic to discuss and analyzed. Alongside this research, this study will focus on the concept of volunteerism and its portrayal, which is, not only considered as an alternative of tourism industry, but also a prominent topic in this era of postmodernism. Many are the alternatives of the tourism industry that exist nowadays, but the case of voluntourism, or volunteer tourism still remain as an interesting topic to debate. By doing so, the main emphasis of this current research will concern one of these alternatives of tourism industry. Observation, analysis, discussion and then critic will be given in a different chapter of this research, which will be based on the current situation in volunteer tourism.

To make it more interesting, strategies are applied such a frame to this study. This first chapter is enlightening the research background, the problem statement, defining the research question and then directing readers to the objective and the advantage of the research. Therefore, this research is going to demonstrate an empirical, logical and rational argumentations to better understand about the concept of volunteer tourism activities, which is the main topic of this study.

By following the directive mentioned before, it is important to analyze straight to the background of the study. In that section, some definitions and

arguments will be given. It will not be only a personal statement, but several and arguments gathered by the authors and referred by scholars' articles who have analyzed and focused on the same field or domain as the author himself. Those scholars and organizations are selected due to their oeuvres and their activities related on tourism sector and its alternatives.

By definition, Lyons and Wearing have perceived that volunteerism is the engagement of people into social action, such as the welfare of a local community, during their period of vacation. They have also stated the reason of why people are interested to do social welfare, as a result, they find out that it could be shaped by the need of freedom and having new experiences in their life (D. Lyons & Wearing, 2008).

In another standpoint, Brown has stated the presence of organizations in volunteer tourism. These organizations could be a non-profit or lucrative organization, in which assume the intervention between the guest and the host community. In his work, he has classified also the type of volunteers (the guest) to two categories: Those who are 'volunteer-minded' and those who are 'vacation-minded' (Brown, 2008).

Hevakovska mentioned that the notion of volunteer tourism, also known as voluntourism, volunteer vacation, humanitarian trips or even work project, has been considered as an alternative of tourism industry (Hevakovska, 2013). Beside these names, actions on volunteer tourism are then defined automatically. It requires an interaction with the local people or the so said local community. Sharing and giving knowledge and experience without expecting anything in return is also one of the primary keys of volunteer tourism. By sharing their

experience, volunteers could enlarge their understanding in which is based on the current situation of the local community. There is also the cultural exchange between the two sides either the local or the guest.

Belica and Islam quantified the contribution of the tourism industry to the global gross domestic product was estimated up to 10% in 2017 (Belicia & Islam, 2018). That rapid progression of tourism industry denotes its over exploitation. Yet, it is considered as the industry, which has a faster growth. The worth of the tourism industry is around USD \$ 8 trillion in 2018. Due to the over exploitation of that sector, the United Nation World Tourism Organization found out more alternative of tourism product such as: ecotourism, volunteer tourism, community-based, nature-based tourism, go-green are the products of the tourism industry (UNWTO, 2002).

These alternatives of the tourism industry are described by the UNWTO according to the sustainable development project, and yet, tourism industry belongs to that. Dharmasasmita has argued that a sustainable development project does not focus only into the economic side, but it tends to balance the exploitation and maintaining the equilibrium between three sectors which shape the pillars of the sustainability. They are: the environment, the society and the economy (Dharmasasmita et al., 2017). Peter confirms also about the goal of sustainable development in the tourism industry is the balance of these three pillars (Peter et al., 2017). And the intersection of these three pillars to shape the sustainable tourism (UNWTO, 2002). Sustainable tourism has become a goal that UNWTO has implemented. Maintaining this steadiness is not that easy, especially in

volunteer tourism. And that is the main discussion about this research. There are some reasons that could be considered and found as the challenges of VT.

In the first perception, engaging in VT consists by devoting his time and spending money to assist and support others people in need. The root of VT has driven a cognitive inconvenient into people's mind. Scholars has affirmed that most of volunteer tourists came from developed country in the western. Godfrey et al. have find out that there is and there will always a difference between volunteer tourist and the host community, and that is because of its root which is connected to the colonialism and neoliberalism era (Godfrey et al., 2019). And stereotype is almost considered as a negative perception of one specific phenomenon.

Even though VT belongs to tourism sector, it has also its own part of contribution in the global economy. According to Wesby, voluntourism market is now approximately USD \$173 billion (Wesby, 2015), and it generates income to support the local community, and supply organization. Despite of that amount of worth in VT, scholars have been wondering about the transparency and the management of the flow of that money.

The next challenges that VT faced nowadays is about their projects. As already said before, the primary key of VT projects should and must be based on sustainability. Observing their activities and projects, it appears merely as a temporary project. And most of NGO's status is based on momentary projects as well.

Talking about NGOs and organizations, VT usually needs the presence of these organizations. It could be international, private of non-governmental

organizations. Moreover, they are the switch which linked the volunteers to the host community. Most of the guests are probably coming from Europe and Western countries while the hosts are usually coming from these developing countries (mostly in Asia and Africa).

To introduce the tourism industry in Indonesia on this research, it is important to understand first the roots of the tourism industry. Schansman has cited that Indonesian government has started to promote the tourism sector in 1991, the motto was “visit the archipelago”. Siahaan mentioned that new regulations and have been revised and have updated seventeen years later. Ever since, new regulations, destinations have been achieved and inaugurated in 2008 (Schansman, 1991; Siahaan, 2008). Yet, as the organization is located (Bali), the statistics of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development shows up that tourism gross domestic product in Indonesia contributes approximately around 4% in 2017(OECD, 2020).

Noreen McDonald defines a millennium generation, people who was born during the last two-decade 20th century. He stated that millennials have the attitude of traveling, merging with the world of digital, then adopting their own lifestyle (McDonald, 2015). They knew life before, during the penetration and then life with internet. That allows them to fit easily into the capacity of adaptation and adopting lifestyle.

The United Nation has confirmed the total number of youth in the world, it shows that 42% of the world population are between the age of 15-34 years old (UNDESPD, 2015). According to Moller, youths have an important role in political and cultural development. In his writing, he took the concern of Martin

Luther, who has created the reform at the age of 37 years old, moreover, he has also mentioned about the force of the youth in the modern world. The idea that Moller tries to share with us is that youth should be considered as the source of social change, the roots of the ideology that could be changing the entire country or even the nation (Moller, 1968).

Considering this percentage of youth in the world population, a study has found that 87% of youth are living in a developing country (Inayatullah, 2016). Voluntourism allows them to take responsibility by taking care and giving hope to others. Yet, the generation gap between them and old instructors will be erased. It will be easy for them to share experience and knowledge. The volunteer will be considered as an inspiration for those who are helping. Eri and Shi-chi argued that, youth motivation into engaging in voluntourism are based on their aspiration of social change and the need of an authentic lifestyle which is often characterized by freedom (Erni & Shi-chi Leung, 2019).

Known as an archipelago, tourism sector in Indonesia represents a full potential resource to the tourism industry. Bali or the famous Island of god, is the first destination that attracts people whenever tourism destination in Indonesia is mentioned. It is known also as the capital city of tourists; Bali has been affected by over tourism where a huge number of tourists from different countries came to visit there at the same time or period of time. It belongs also to the most visited provinces in Indonesia, and because of that, Bali was chosen as the field of study to conduct this research and make it more relevant and interesting.

Vorlaufer has specified that during the last decades years, Bali has been encountered by over exploitation of the tourism industry, which is not an

optimistic perspective of the local communities and its environment, it could go to the disadvantageous impacts for its communities and environments (Vorlauffer, 1999). According to the Bali regional office of justice and human right in 2019, the following data demonstrates the annual visitors of Bali between 2014 to 2018. From 3.766.638 on 2014 to 6.070.473 visitors on 2018. Over the past four years, the total of visitors in Bali has increasingly grown. On 2018 numbers represent almost the double of the year 2014. From that, the launch of visit Indonesia year has its result and Bali was also involved.

Knowing this information has brought me to the choice of this research to the case study of Bali. Many scholars have been working in the industry of tourism, but studying about its alternatives is still considered as a fresh topic. It is one of the reasons why this inquiry is centered on the alternative tourism industry through volunteer tourism in Bali.

This qualitative study highlights about the type of activism seen and shown by Volunteer Programs Bali then to reveal their interest toward their activities. As volunteer tourism needs the interaction of the local community on-site, the author will conduct a critical analysis based on the Karl Marx standpoint on society applied on volunteer tourism activities.

Aside from mass tourism, the World Tourism Organization has confirmed many alternatives of the tourism industry. Scholars, also agree and have been considering these tourism' alternatives as: cultural-based, natural-based, authenticity-based, local-communities based and, so forth. They could be also considered as an interesting topic to be studied (Cohen, 2007; Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2018; Stamou & Paraskevopoulos, 2006; UNWTO, 2002) . Turker

argues that Volunteer tourism is considered as an alternative of tourism product itself and it is mostly associated with social welfare activities (Turker, 2017). Alomari confirms that affirmation, the authenticity of voluntourism is the shape of decommodification of tourism industry itself (Alomari, 2016).

As tourism industry itself has been too much exploited. Volunteer tourism or volunteerism, is the alternative approach to prevent mass tourism. Lee and Syah have established that the tourism industry should be equilibrate to avoid the negative impacts of its over commercialization (Lee & Syah, 2018). Anderson et al. have found that voluntourism industry grows quickly comparing to others industry (Anderson et al., 2019). But involving on voluntourism require the willpower and dedicate their time and money in doing welfare and/or social work. Doing volunteer tourism is nowadays another option of traveling. Many youths or group of youths is interested to involve on it. Not only it gives them the opportunity to travel, but it also gives something back from the local society. In this point of view, engaging in volunteer require some necessary background and knowledge on what are supposed to be done (Hevakovska, 2013). Not everyone who wants to do an unpaid assistant could do it. By its definition, volunteerism is doing an unpaid work and vacation at the same time. It needs also the ability of giving something without expecting something back in return. Volunteer tourism could be defined by volunteering into social work in another country or city. It could be internationalized or inside the country itself. Mostly organized by the United Nation, volunteer tourism has been exploited, According to Wesby, voluntourism market is now approximately \$173 billion (Wesby, 2015), and it still generates income to support the local community, but and supplying these

non-profit organizations that helps youth to interact into social welfare. Furthermore, many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), assume the recruitments of those who are interested in engaging in volunteerism. Online research of the word “volunteering”, is driving user to end up with a large choice of volunteering application. Scholars state that mostly millennial generation are interested in the volunteer tourism program (Cavagnaro et al., 2018; Wearing et al., 2018). Engaging in volunteerism means like participants are ready to devote their time onto unpaid social work, apart from that, there are some requirement and necessary skill before applying (Simkute, 2017).

1.2. Research questions

Based on these stated problems, VT still remains as a serious issue about its existence and its activities. The nuance between the relationship of all actors is not yet well known, while the backbone of organization operating voluntourism activities depends on that relationship. VT has been seen in many angles, based on its roots, activities, management of the cash flow, but hence, a new concept is the center of the interest of this research. Most of the interface of these organizations providing volunteer tourism services, shows their best image and with a positive concept of their activities within their website. Research will be conducted and analyzed by raising and exploring the contents beyond the platform and Karl Marx approach on society is implicated alongside this research.

To better resolve a solution for the current issues on VT, the answers of the following questions will delight more about the abstract relationship on VT.

1. According to the current activities of VPB, what differentiate volunteers' activities from tourism product?
2. Based on VPB online platform, what makes it a real volunteer but not tourism organization?

Aligning to the current situation, the pandemic of COVID-19 restrains tourism industry sector. Yet, the era of new normal leads us more to enter in advance in the digital world. It could favorized people to be more in digital creative and to be innovative on that domain.

By engaging in volunteerism, another perspective and goals are established. If being tourist is just limited by visiting one place, entering in volunteer tourism require the willpower. Not only to visit and discover the place, but to give a meaning, a respect and especially a value to the local community and their uses and customs. Although, if normal tourism could do the same, they focus more on their journey instead of the social work. Hence, volunteers participate more on well-being of the local communities rather than their journey. That is why volunteerism has a common behavior to altruism. And it is the way they adopt the character of doing and or giving something good to others.

1.3. Objective of this research

Indeed, most of millennials enjoy having fun and adventure in traveling, this research will inspire others to give a new sense of understanding the other alternative to consume tourism product. If tourism industry is too much exploited and over commercialized, youth volunteers at Volunteer Programs Bali testimonies and rates will reveal a new perspective to observe their approach on

voluntourism. To answer of the first question, I will analyze VPB activism in their social media platform. The second one will be revealed their interest by doing their activities.

Moreover, this research aims to elaborate a text analysis of the tourism alternative, especially on volunteerism. The study will be conducted under media analysis framework. The concept about empowering and developing sustainable tourism projects through voluntourism will be observed and discussed. A textual analysis will be operated to analyze the contents of social media of the organization, yet, that is the utmost backbone of this study. The know-how regarding the easy adaptation, the respect of the welcoming community and giving value to their culture also is required so, it will assume the icebreaking between volunteers and local community. Briefly, this study aims to:

1. To identify the concept of volunteer tourism and reveal various activisms of the so-called 'volunteerism' initiated by Volunteer Programs Bali.
2. Analyzing the interest of the VPB behind their activities and beyond their social media activism platform.
3. Give a critical discursive, which make this research more interesting and will ease the sense of understanding to the readers.

1.4. Research Advantages

First of all, this research could provide as a reference to those organizations, who establish the voluntourism program whether in Bali somewhere else. With research, they could improve their activities, conducting them to support sustainable tourism.

Academically, the results of this present research are supposed to be an addition for those who are referring and interested in the issues of voluntourism. Whatever the discipline is, this work could be used. However, tourism and media studies are the main discipline used on this research.

For those who are considered as a traveler, they will be enlightened by the importance of the ecotourism and the value of the local community. They will be redirected also to the concept of sustainability either on tourism or in their daily life.

To all activists, this research will help them to focus on a specific field, which is not yet known by the majority of people. Their action could help to bring change and hope for those remote and undiscoverable destinations that needs support from outsiders.